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IN THE CLAIMS

1-69. (Canceled)

70. (Previously presented) A method of a server downloading data via a client-server communications network, the method comprising:

receiving a request for data from a client;

determining if the request for data can be fulfilled within a predetermined target period; and

sending to the client a proxy list comprising an address of at least one proxy server client which stores requested data in a local cache if the request for data is unable to be fulfilled within the predetermined target period.

71. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 70, wherein the predetermined target period is variable.

72. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 71, wherein the predetermined target period varies as a function of a client-server connection speed.

73. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 72, wherein the predetermined target period is shortened when the client-server connection speed is relatively fast and lengthened when the client-server connection speed is relatively slow.

74. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 70, further comprising maintaining a look-up table which correlates items of data with addresses of one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached.

75. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 74, further comprising: receiving cache status change reports from the one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached; and

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updating the look-up table using the cache status change reports.

76. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 74, further comprising:
assessing connection speeds to the one or more proxy server clients whose
addresses are contained in the look-up table; and
discarding or demoting the addresses of proxy server clients having relatively
slow connection speeds.
77. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 70, further comprising:
receiving an address of a proxy server client that provided requested data; and
assembling an address list of proxy server clients most commonly accessed to
obtain requested data.
78. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 70, wherein the proxy list
comprises addresses of proxy server clients whose workload is below a workload limit.
79. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 70, wherein the network
comprises the Internet, the at least one proxy server client comprises a user terminal running
a web browser, and the respective local cache is associated with the web browser on the user
terminal.
80. (Previously presented) A client-server communications network comprising:
a plurality of clients, each client including a local cache for storing data
downloaded via the network; and
a server including means for receiving a request for data from a client, means
for determining if the request for data can be fulfilled within a predetermined target period,
and means for sending to the client a proxy list comprising an address of at least one proxy
server client which stores requested data in a local cache if the request for data is unable to be
fulfilled within the predetermined target period.

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81. (Previously presented) A network according to claim 80, wherein the predetermined target period is variable.
82. (Previously presented) A network according to claim 81, wherein the server includes means for sensing a client-server connection speed, and means for varying the predetermined target period based upon the client-server connection speed.
83. (Previously presented) A network according to claim 80, wherein the server includes means for maintaining a look-up table which correlates items of data with addresses of one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached.
84. (Previously presented) A network according to claim 83, wherein the server includes means for receiving cache status change reports from the one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached, and means for updating the look-up table using the cache status change reports.
85. (Previously presented) A network according to claim 83, wherein the server includes means for assessing connection speeds to the one or more proxy server clients whose addresses are contained in the look-up table, and means for discarding or demoting the addresses of proxy server clients having relatively slow connection speeds.
86. (Previously presented) A network according to claim 80, wherein the server includes means for receiving an address of a proxy server client that provided requested data, and means for assembling an address list of proxy server clients most commonly accessed to obtain requested data.
87. (Previously presented) A network according to claim 80, wherein the proxy list comprises addresses of proxy server clients whose workload is below a workload limit.

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88. (Previously presented) A network according to claim 80, wherein the network comprises the Internet, the plurality of clients comprise user terminals running web browsers, and the respective local caches are associated with the browsers on the user terminals.

89. (Previously presented) A server for a client-server communications network, the server comprising:

means for receiving a request for data from a client;

means for determining if the request for data can be fulfilled within a predetermined target period; and

means for sending to the client a proxy list comprising an address of at least one proxy server client which stores requested data in a local cache if the request for data is unable to be fulfilled within the predetermined target period.

90. (Previously presented) A server according to claim 89, wherein the predetermined target period is variable.

91. (Previously presented) A server according to claim 90, further comprising:

means for sensing a client-server connection speed; and

means for varying the predetermined target period based upon the client-server connection speed.

92. (Previously presented) A server according to claim 89, further comprising means for maintaining a look-up table which correlates items of data with addresses of one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached.

93. (Previously presented) A server according to claim 92, further comprising:

means for receiving cache status change reports from the one or more proxy server clients at which the items of data are cached; and

means for updating the look-up table using the cache status change reports.

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94. (Previously presented) A server according to claim 92, further comprising:
means for assessing connection speeds to the one or more proxy server clients
whose addresses are contained in the look-up table; and
means for discarding or demoting the addresses of proxy server clients having
relatively slow connection speeds.

95. (Previously presented) A server according to claim 89, further comprising:
means for receiving an address of a proxy server client that provided requested
data; and
means for assembling an address list of proxy server clients most commonly
accessed to obtain requested data.

96. (Previously presented) A server according to claim 89, wherein the proxy list
comprises addresses of proxy server clients whose workload is below a workload limit.

97. (Previously presented) A server according to claim 89, wherein the network
comprises the Internet.